



The WGC Commends Minister Joly's "Creative Canada" Vision

Toronto – Sept. 28, 2017 — Minister of Canadian Heritage Mélanie Joly delivered a much-anticipated speech today outlining the government's vision for Canada's cultural and creative industries. The Writers Guild of Canada commends Minister Joly for emphasizing the key role screenwriters play in the industry by announcing a new focus on early-stage pitch document and script development at the Canada Media Fund (CMF). As well, the government will top up CMF funding to account for monies lost from diminishing contributions from cable and satellite companies.

The Minister also demonstrated the government's commitment to Canadian-created programs with the announcement that Netflix will spend \$500 million over five years on original Canadian productions.

"We're very pleased that the Minister has listened, and heard, the concerns of Canadian screenwriters," says WGC Executive Director Maureen Parker. "She understands that a high-quality script is crucial to the production of a high-quality show, and that means investing in the people who write the scripts. It means focusing on the early stages of script development, something we proposed in our Digi CanCon submission, to make sure screenwriters have sufficient time to do the best work and aren't self-financing. Of course screenwriters around the country are also very glad to have Netflix setting up shop in Canada, creating another place to pitch ideas for great Canadian series."

The WGC also applauds the government's new export strategy, which will help Canadian screenwriters to share their ideas with other markets and with potential new financing partners. With the new emphasis on script development and the new export strategy, there is reason to be optimistic for a healthier industry for Canadian screenwriters.

The WGC recognizes that Creative Canada is an important first step. Much is still to be determined, with an upcoming review of the Broadcasting Act, a possible reassessment of the CRTC's role, and a CBC mandate renewal. But it is extremely positive that the new Creative Canada policy framework puts showrunners and screenwriters at its very centre.

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The Writers Guild of Canada represents 2,200 professional English-language screenwriters across Canada, the people who write Canadian entertainment for all screens.